DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 411 706 FL 801 179

AUTHOR	Graham, Bill
TITLE	The Tutor's Toolbox.
SPONS AGENCY	British Columbia Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour, Victoria.; Human Resource Development Canada, Ottawa (Ontario).
PUB DATE	1996-00-00
NOTE	64p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Literacy B.C., 622-510 West Hastings St., Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6B 1L8 ($2 Canadian).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Audiovisual Aids; Class Activities; Classroom Techniques; Cloze Procedure; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Instructional Materials; *Language Patterns; *Literacy Education; Newspapers; Phonics; Pronunciation Instruction; Publications; *Reading Instruction; Second Language Instruction; *Spelling; Story Telling; Teaching Guides; *Writing Instruction

ABSTRACT

The guide contains 25 useful techniques for teaching literacy. It is designed for basic literacy instruction but may also be used in English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instruction; three of the tools are specific to ESL students. Published sources that provide a fuller explanation of the techniques are listed after each entry and in a bibliography (14 items). Techniques include: the language experience story; phonics; key words; word patterns; word cards; sensory reinforcement; word compounding; overlearning; indexing; duet reading; block comprehension; newspaper use; cloze procedure; brief reading workouts; coached experience story; writing starts; spelling anchors; precious words; sentence play; nonsense words; games and incentives; dialogues (ESL); pronunciation contrasts (ESL); stress exercises; and publications. The description of each technique includes one or more suggested activity, with suggestions for variations. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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THE TUTOR'S TOOLBOX

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This project was funded by the Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Education, Skills and Training
and
Human Resources Development Canada,
National Literacy Secretariat

Formatting: Nancy Richardson

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the support of the College of New Caledonia and its Burns Lake Regional Manager, Cathy Ashurst, in the preparation of this book, and of Linda Mitchell of Literacy B.C. who tirelessly sought funds for its publication. Special thanks as well to Audrey Thomas for her advice, support and wonderful proofreading and editing contributions.

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INTRODUCTION 1.

The Tutor's Toolbox is a field guide to 25 of the most useful techniques in literacy tutoring. It is written for persons who are trained as volunteer tutors, but need a refresher in the various teaching devices available to them.

Those who have waited a long time to be matched, or others who are moving on to new students, will find this book a useful overview of the basic techniques.

Think of this guide the way you would of a carpenter's tool box --- full of specialized equipment which will make carpentry easier, but not an instructional course in the craft of carpentry. Instruction in the interpersonal techniques so important to successful tutoring is best left to tutor training classes, such as the ones offered by colleges, school districts, libraries and community literacy programs.

Although these techniques are aimed at basic literacy students, they will also be valuable for students who are learning English as a second language (ESL). Tutoring tools 22, 23, and 24 are specific to ESL students. As a matter of style, I have referred to students by the male pronoun in odd numbered chapters, and the female in even chapters.

Published resources which provide a fuller explanation of the various tools are listed at the bottom of each entry and in the bibliography at the end of the book.

1. THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE STORY

Language experience works well with non-readers and limited readers. Begin by encouraging your student to talk naturally about himself. Pick up a sentence or two of his spoken thought and say, "What you've just said would make a good story. I'll write your words down and we can read them together."

Print or write these sentences exactly as the student spoke them. Use correct spellings, but do not correct grammar or vocabulary.

Sit beside your student and read the manuscript aloud twice, running your finger under each line, word by word. Invite him to read the story himself, assisting when necessary. Let him read the story through several times until it comes easily.

Some words can be printed on small cards, to be learned as sight words. When your student has studied the word card, ask him to match it with the word in the text.

Keep the experience story and re-read it frequently in later lessons. Suggest that your student make a book of his own writing, starting with the first experience story.

1. THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE STORY (continued)

VARIATIONS:

- Make a copy of the story, cut the lines into strips, and match to the manuscript. Cut the strips into words, jumble, and match them again.

- Have your student trace his experience story with a felt tip pen.

- Dictate the story while your student writes it down. Make a cloze exercise ***(See Tool 13).***

- Practice stress and intonation by substituting nonsense words (like da-da-DA-da) for actual words ***(Tool 20).***

- Identify some nouns in the story and think of some other nouns which are more specific or colourful.

RESOURCE:

A Guide for Tutoring Adult Literacy Students

2. PHONICS

If your student knows the letters of the alphabet and the sounds of the letters, she can use phonics to decode most words.

Starting with single syllable words having short vowel sounds, show her how to speak the sounds of each letter in sequence so they blend together to make the complete word sound (e.g., cab, cot, cut, car). When she can sound out the letters, see if she can make other words by substituting different consonant sounds at the beginning or ending.

Explain that some consonants, like "c" and "g," have more than one sound. The letter "c" can have a hard "k" sound, as in "cat," or a soft "s" sound, as in "city." The letter "g" can have a hard "g" sound, as in "gap," or a soft "j" sound, as in "ginger." Vowel sounds can be short, long or modified. If some sounds are not known, teach them using the key word approach ***(Tool 3)*** or word patterns ***(Tool 4)***. Some combinations of consonants, called digraphs (e.g., th, wh, sh, ch, qu, ck) need to be taught as single sounds. Others are blends of individual letter sounds (e.g., tr, bl, str, cr, fr, ld, rt).

2. PHONICS (continued)

VARIATIONS:

Same starting letter

Think of words for people, places, flowers, or animals which all start with the same letter.

Riddles

Say, "I'm thinking of a word which means unhappy and begins with Sa..." or, "I spy with my eye something that begins with p."

Odd One Out

Read a group of three to five words and ask your student to identify the one which does not contain a certain vowel or consonant sound.

Loony lines

Make silly sentences of words beginning with a certain letter: "Tiny tutors talk like tough teddy bears."

RESOURCE:

A Guide for Tutoring Adult Literacy Students

3. KEY WORDS

If your student can't always remember the sound a letter makes, show him how to choose a key word to help remember it. Pick three or more words containing the target letter or digraph sound and read them aloud.

For example, you might read the words "ship," "shake," "shall," "shy" and then ask him to repeat these words aloud. Then ask him to concentrate on the "shuh" sound at the beginning, and to pick one of the examples as his key word to help remember the sound of this digraph. When he wants to recall the "shuh" sound of the letters "sh," he says to himself, "sh" as in "ship".

Some consonants and digraphs like "c," "g," and "h" have more than one sound, and therefore require more than one key word. Vowels and dipthongs have many sounds which may be taught as key words or word patterns ***(Tool 4)***.

VARIATIONS:

- Read your student a list of 10 words and ask him to say which ones contain the target letter sound. After he gets good at recognizing the consonant sound when it appears at the beginning of the word, read other lists with the sound in the middle or end of each word.

3. KEY WORDS (continued)

☐ Make a master list of key words and rehearse them regularly. Explain that the key words are important in the same way house keys and car keys are -- they unlock useful meanings.

RESOURCE:

A Guide for Tutoring Adult Literacy Students

4. WORD PATTERNS

Help your student to recognize vowel sounds by teaching them as word patterns. Write a short starter word at the top of the page, then ask your student to write similar words underneath, using different beginning or ending letters.

"S" at
"H" at
"C" at
"R" at
"M" at

Your student learns that "a" usually sounds the same in this pattern, but makes a different sound in the pattern, "rate, date, fate, gate, hate, mate..." and still another sound in the pattern, "ball, call, fall, hall, tall, wall..."

Some students will not understand how to rhyme words. Train your student to rhyme by reading a list of rhyming nonsense words and asking her to focus on the end sounds. Multisyllable rhymes may be easier to hear at first: "Hamburger, samburger, mamburger, ramburger." When she can recognize rhyming words, read a series with an odd one out: --- "kitten, mitten, broken, bitten, written."

4. WORD PATTERNS (continued)

VARIATIONS:

Starter Words

Write three or more different starter words across the top of the page and challenge her to see how many different words she can make in each column by substituting the initial or final letter.

Word Wheel

Cut out two circular shapes of different diameters and join them at the centres with a paper fastener. Write beginning consonants around the outer circumference, and vowels plus final consonants around the inner circumference. Rotate the wheel to match the consonants and phonemes in different patterns.

5. WORD CARDS

Word cards, sometimes called flash cards, can be made by cutting three by five index cards into quarters. New words are printed or written onto the cards, which are then displayed one at a time. Your student may look at the word and say it three times, trying to imprint the image on his mind. Words thus learned are "sight words." When a word is successfully recognized in three consecutive presentations, it may be added to a separate stack of known sight words. Not more than five new word cards should be introduced at one lesson.

VARIATIONS:

☐ Ask your student to match a word card with the original in an experience story.

☐ Make a duplicate deck of word cards for home practice. You and your student can play Fish with the duplicate decks by shuffling both together, dealing a hand of seven cards to each player, and taking turns drawing a card from the deck. Pairs of identical words can be laid on the table, face-up.

☐ Ask your student to arrange 10 word cards in alphabetical order.

5. WORD CARDS (continued)

☐ Arrange word cards into sentences, trying for as many different constructions as possible.

Word Card Poker

Group cards in piles of nouns, verbs, adjectives, articles and prepositions. Deal your student five to 10 random words, and pretend he wins $10 for each of the words he can include in a single good sentence. Tell him he can "buy" words from the various category piles for $10 each. He loses $10 for each of the random words which is not used or misused. Keep a running tally sheet as you play this game over a number of weeks.

6. SENSORY REINFORCEMENTS

Visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile reinforcements will help your student to remember certain troublesome words. When the normal sight word and phonic methods don't seem to work, use these sensory devices to reinforce the memory of the word.

Visual

Ask your student to close her eyes and "see" the troublesome word in her mind's eye, like the face of an old friend. Some students may have trouble visualizing.

Auditory

Ask her to look at the word and speak it three or more times, stressing the syllables and the difficult phonic elements.

Kinesthetic

Ask your student to use her first two fingers like an imaginary paintbrush to write the word in the air, on a tabletop, or to trace over a written copy of the word. She should say each syllable aloud as it is written. Cursive writing, if known, will help her to sense the proper connection of the letters and syllables.

6. SENSORY REINFORCEMENTS (continued)

Tactile

Ask her to trace the word on sandpaper, on felt, or in a pan of wet sand. Short words can be shaped in plasticine or play dough. If acceptable, write the word on your student's back with your finger as she writes it on paper or in the air.

7. DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Compound Words

Provide a list of compound words like icebox, shipyard, oilskin, jackpot, and network. Show how each is really two words joined together. From a list of 10 words, ask your student to find the five compound words. From two lists of small words, ask your student to join up the compound words. Invite him to make up some compound words.

Familiar Parts

Provide a list of unfamiliar two syllable words (like tatter, dapple, randy, render, trample, tappet) and ask your student to break each into two parts, then sound out each part by comparison with a familiar word pattern. For example, in "tat-ter" we know "cat," "sat," and "mat" so T-A-T must say "tat". We know "her" so maybe T-E-R is "ter" ***(Word Patterns, Tool 4).***

Prefixes and Suffixes

Show your student some prefixes and suffixes (like un-, re-, in-, er-, -ing, -ed). Search for others in a list of ten words. Invent new words by adding prefixes or suffixes to known words.

7. DIVIDE AND CONQUER (continued)

Analysis

Analyse multisyllabic words (like outstanding, prospective, dividing, retailer) by dividing them into familiar parts with slash marks. When a part of the word is unfamiliar, make up a group of examples with similar patterns, prefixes or suffixes.

8. OVERLEARNING

When your student repeatedly confuses two common words with each other (such as house and horse, which and what, those and there) it may be helpful to give one of the words a rest while exhaustively teaching the other. In this way, the one word will become an old friend, and the other will begin to look different by comparison. Sensory reinforcements, context exercises, dictation, and word patterns will all help in the overlearning process. Memory tags may also help, e.g., "those" -- as in "nose."

Reintroduce the second word only after the first word has been taught exhaustively.

9. INDEXING

Write words on 10 index cards (or use sight word cards) and ask your student to arrange them in alphabetical order. After a few lessons, ask if he would like to be regularly timed and charted at this activity. In later lessons, alphabetize to the second and third letters, as in "quaint," "quell," "quit," or "bank," "bell," "blank."

It may help your student to remember alphabetical order if you write the alphabet on a cardboard strip which can be paper-clipped to the top of his exercise page. Some find it easier to remember the letters in four groups, using the acronym," All Elephants Love Sweets."

A BCD
E FGHIJK
L MNOPQR
S TUVWXYZ

VARIATIONS:

☐ Practise finding names in a phone book, recipes in a recipe file, words in a dictionary, subjects in a book index.

9. INDEXING (continued)

☐ Have your student create a personal dictionary, using an exercise book. Write the capital letter and lower case letter in the top corner of each page, and words which begin with that letter underneath. Your student chooses and records words which interest him under each letter.

10. DUET READING

Select some short reading which is just a little above your student's ability. Sit beside her and ask your student to read aloud with you as you move your finger beneath the lines. Tell her that the object of this lesson is to read the selection fluently, without awkward pauses at the end of words or phrases. Read through the entire passage together at a steady pace.

Continue to read at a normal rate, even if your student hesitates, or falls behind, but stop if she stops completely. Over time it will become easier for your student to keep up, as she acquires the habit of looking ahead at coming words to keep from falling behind. Do not ask comprehension questions, as the purpose of this exercise is to develop fluency and to overcome word-by-word reading. The technique is also known as "Neurological Impress" and "Echo Reading."

Tips On Duet Reading

If your student keeps up easily, use more difficult material.

This works well as a 10 minute exercise near the end of each session. A California study showed an average gain of 2.2 grade levels among students with severe reading handicaps who received 7.5 hours of instruction in this method over a period of six weeks.

11. BLOCKING

Try this technique if your student struggles with slow, word-by-word reading. Select some reading material slightly above your student's level and mark off phrases of four to 10 words with obliques or brackets. Tell your student to look over the words in the brackets, then read them aloud, trying for fluency. He should read through the whole text in this way, mentally digesting the bracketed words, then speaking the whole group without awkward pauses between words.

VARIATIONS:

☐ Select some simple two-part dialogue from a novel, short story, or play. Read two or three exchanges of the dialogue through once, then ask your student to choose which part he would like to play. Highlight or underline those lines, block them, and practice them until the words come fluently.

☐ Finally, with you taking one part and your student the other, make a dramatic reading, as though you were acting in a play. Practice delivering the lines five or six times, with different emphases. If your student is interested, record your results and play them back.

12. NEWSPAPER

TECHNIQUES:

Previews

Using two copies of a newspaper, show your student how to preview the news and search for details. Back issues are usually available free for this purpose from the newspaper office.

Headliners

Read only the headlines and try to guess the subject and details of each story. Then read the story and discuss the accuracy of the headline.

Match-ups

Clip four or five stories from the newspaper, clip off the headlines, and try to match the stories and headlines. Encourage your student to search quickly for the main idea in each story.

Jumbles

Clip a story, cut it into paragraphs, and have your student try to reassemble it in a logical order, remembering that news writing is like an inverted pyramid, with the most important facts at the top. The opening paragraph should be correctly identified, but

subsequent paragraphs may be sequenced in more than one way.

Cutlines

Clip the captions from some newspaper photos and ask your student to match them or write new captions in newspaper style.

Colour Me Yellow

Using two copies of a newspaper, read an editorial, a letter to the editor, or a column with your student. Ask her to mark with a yellow highlighter words or phrases which carry opinion or bias.

Random Lines

Place a ruler across several columns of type and copy all the words on that line. Add additional words to join these random lines together into a standard sentence. Assure your student that silly or bizarre thoughts are acceptable because the purpose of the exercise is to develop flexibility and skill with connectives.

Ad Decoding

Translate the advertising shorthand of a display or classified ad into full sentences of standard English.

13. CLOZE PROCEDURE

Use white-out fluid or a felt marker to delete every tenth word in a paragraph. Ask your student to read the piece aloud, filling in the missing words, or words which would work as well. Stress that any word which makes sense is acceptable.

Begin with familiar work such as an experience story. Move on to simplified writing on a subject of interest. Magazine or book pages can be photocopied for cloze exercises.

If he finds this work frustrating, assure him that context guessing is an unconscious strategy employed by all successful readers, and the cloze exercises will prepare him to tackle material which might appear, on the surface, to be too difficult.

He will find cloze exercises easier if you select reading material of high personal interest.

VARIATIONS:

- Print the missing words at the bottom of the page so your student can cross them out as they are used.

13. CLOZE PROCEDURE (continued)

- ☐ Leave in the first letter, or the last syllable.
- ☐ Turn the tables by asking your student to make a cloze exercise for you.
- ☐ Make more challenging cloze exercises by deleting every fifth word, every article, every verb, or every adjective.
- ☐ Write short sentences with nonsense words whose meaning must be guessed from context: "She took him by the arm and schlamped him."
- ☐ Encourage him to guess the meaning of other words.

14. READING WORKOUTS

Brief workouts can help your student to build up her reading muscles. Sometimes two or more of these ideas can be combined.

Alternate Reading

Find two copies of a story or article of 500 words or less which is written near your student's level. Read the first paragraph, then have your student read the second. Continue reading alternate paragraphs until your student tires. Discuss the content.

Simplified Readings

Find a short article on a subject of high interest and rewrite it, simplifying the sentences and reducing the vocabulary. Make a copy, read it aloud, then ask your student to try reading it.

Story Reading

Occasionally read aloud to your student at the end of a lesson, introducing a story or article which may arouse interest.

14. READING WORKOUTS (continued)

Endurance Reading

If your student reads well, but bogs down after a page or two, help her build up her reading stamina by recording how much she can read of a high interest book before tiring. Note the number of pages and ask her to read a half page more next time.

Read, Ask, Paraphrase (RAP)

Ask your student to read one or two sentences, ask herself, "What did I just read?," and state in her own words what the sentence means. This is useful for students who decode well but lack comprehension.

Repeat Reading

Make two copies of a short, high interest article. Read the selection aloud while your student reads along silently. Underline and discuss five key words. Ask her to practice reading the article through silently until she thinks she can read it aloud without too many errors. Ask her if any other words need explanation. Listen as she reads the article through.

14. READING WORKOUTS (continued)

Stop and Predict

When reading fiction, stop and ask your student to predict what will happen next. Explain that stopping for reflection is a technique used by all good readers.

Skimming

Choose a high interest non-fiction article from a newspaper, magazine, or *Reader's Digest*. Read the title, look at the illustrations, and discuss what the article might be about. Ask her to read the first sentence only of each paragraph. Explain that first sentences often state the main idea of a paragraph. Encourage her to piece together the main ideas of the article, then re-read it to fill in the blanks.

Read and Report

Ask your student to read silently for five minutes, and then recall the main idea and details. If she is reading fiction, ask her to report on as much as she can remember about one aspect of the story, such as plot, characters, or setting.

14. READING WORKOUTS (continued)

Sprints

Choose an easy book and have her read normally for five minutes, then count the lines and calculate her reading rate in words per minute. Set the timer for an appropriate number of minutes and ask her to read at a more rapid pace, so quickly that many words will be skipped over. Calculate words per minute and repeat, trying to read even faster, even if very little is understood. Finally, read again at a normal pace and calculate words per minute.

Window blind

If your student's eyes regress (look back and re-read earlier words) have her cover each line with a 3 x 5 card or a sheet of paper as she reads down the page.

Tape Measure

Make a tape recording of your student reading a challenging piece of writing. Tape her reading the same piece six months later and play both tapes for comparison.

Cloze Exercise: See Tool 13.

Duet Reading: See Tool 10.

Blocking: See Tool 11.

15. COACHED EXPERIENCE STORY

When your student can write sentences, suggest that he write his own experience story. Ask him to tell you the story, but to write it himself. Coach him to remember what he first said, then to copy those spoken words into writing.

If difficult words come up, ask him to write the beginning letter and leave a blank for the others which can be filled in later. Ask him to make the writing flow just as his speech flows, listening to his inner speaking voice and trying to make the written words flow just as smoothly.

When the writing bogs down, ask him to read aloud from the beginning, seeking to recapture the flow of the spoken words. Write double spaced, so corrections can be made.

EXTRAS (OTHER TIPS):

Self-Recording

Make a tape recording of your student telling his story, then compare a transcript with the student's own written version.

15. COACHED EXPERIENCE STORY (continued)

Power Words

Explain that some words provide an extra jolt of power to speech or writing. Ask him to pick out the power words in his own writing or, if none exist, to add some. Any choice is acceptable; the object is to foster confidence in a personal speaking and writing voice.

16. WRITING STARTERS

Sentence Completions

Read your student the first words of a sentence and ask her to write a completion in her own words. Encourage her to write quickly, putting down any words which come to mind, even if they don't make much sense. After she has written two or three completions, read her another beginning. Use beginnings such as, "I always..., I wish..., I never..., I hope..., I sometimes..., I remember..., I hate..., I notice..., I believe...". After five or ten of these, ask her to select the most meaningful one. Ask her to quickly write down five or more additional facts about this sentence. Have her tell you about these facts, then write the facts down in sentences, as a personal story. Encourage her to write "quick n' rough," the way professional writers do. She can polish up her words and sentences later when she gets to the final draft.

Brainstorm list

Ask her to rapidly write down a list of personal story ideas. She should write as quickly as she can and avoid pauses for thought. If nothing comes to mind, she can repeat a word, write down names of visible objects in the room, write rhyming words, or, when all else fails, write her own name over and over. The important thing is to keep writing. After a few minutes ask her to stop

16. WRITING STARTERS (continued)

and pick out one idea which seems interesting and fruitful. Make a new brainstorm list focused on the interesting idea. Ask her to talk about her list, then write it as a personal story.

Mindmap

Write a one word story idea in the centre of the page, then write down secondary ideas as branches off the main one, like branches from the trunk of a tree. For each successive idea, try to think of at least two secondary ideas until the page is filled.

Continuous Writing

If your student freezes before a blank sheet of paper, ask her, as an experiment, to write continuously for three minutes. The pen must keep moving on the paper. The words can be any which chance across her mind, even if they don't make sense. If nothing at all comes, she should keep writing one word or phrase over and over until some other words start to flow or until the three minutes are up.

16. WRITING STARTERS (continued)

Sense inventory

Ask her to write about everything she perceives through her five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. She can begin each sentence with the words, "I see..., I hear..." etc. She should write about what she observes in the present moment, not something she imagines.

Prime the pump

Read two short examples of writing on a similar theme from an anthology of writing by adult literacy students. Ask your student which she prefers and what parts of the writing she likes best. Ask her to brainstorm an idea list and begin work on some writing of her own.

Me first

Encourage your student to find her own writing ideas. Avoid providing topics.

Journal

Ask your student to write one or two pages per week in a lined notebook. Tell her she can write anything she wants -- she can even copy -- but she must write an agreed-upon number of pages per week. Tell her you

16. WRITING STARTERS (continued)

care about the quantity of her journal writing, but you will not check the quality. You won't correct this writing, or even read it unless invited. Stress that her journal is free, private, practice writing about anything she wants. Mention some common subjects of journal keepers: personal diary, notes about children, family history, dreams of the future, poetry, thoughts on politics or news, statements of belief, memories of childhood, descriptions of beautiful things, copies of favorite poems or Bible verses, reflections on reading, retelling of familiar stories, and collections of quotable quotes.

Vest Pocket Writing

Small notebooks which will fit into a purse or vest pocket will allow her to take her journal with her, making observations about her world as she moves through the day.

Timed Writing

Some people may prefer to write for a specified period of time rather than a specified quantity. Twenty minutes is ideal for many.

17. SPELLING ANCHORS

Show your student how to anchor correct spellings in his mind, using the four-step method:

1. Say the word aloud three times, noticing syllable prefixes, root, doubled letters, or other features.

2. Close eyes and visualize the word, like the face of an old friend.

3. Write the word.

4. Check for correctness and repeat steps one through four if necessary.

ADDITIONAL METHODS:

Sensory Reinforcements (See Tool 6)

Mnemonic Devices

Associate the word with a short phrase or concrete image, to aid the memory. Invent these with your student. For example: "The principal is my pal, Don't believe a lie, Those like in nose, I made a speech at the meeting."

Parts of the Whole

Break larger words into prefixes, roots, and suffixes.

17. SPELLING ANCHORS (continued)

Family Tree

If your student asks how to spell "skate," ask him to think of other words in the same pattern, such as "mate," "date," "fate," "gate."

Visualization

Try to see a picture in the shapes of the letters. The letter "l" in "cliff" looks like a cliff.

Pinups

Write important words on post-it notes and attach them to the bathroom mirror, refrigerator, and other places where they will be noticed.

Personal Spelling Book

Encourage your student to collect his own spelling words in a special notebook. Break the words into syllables. Identify the part of each word which causes trouble and write this part in larger letters. Make date columns on the right hand side of the pages, and enter check marks for the days when each word is correctly spelled. Allow your student to correct his own work.

18. PRECIOUS WORDS

Obtain a felt tip pen, rollerball pen, or calligraphic pen (*Crayola* makes an inexpensive water-base version). For homework, ask your student to choose a word which has special power or feeling for her. Ask her to copy the word carefully, in large, cursive or manuscript letters, on a sheet of better quality paper. For variation, copy a poem, Bible verse, pithy saying, three or four word self assessment (e.g., "Born To Shop"), or the alphabet.

The special word or verse can be displayed on a wall, used as a book mark, or collected in a notebook.

Felt tip pens make it easier to control the shape of the letters. Explain that beautiful writing was one of the great arts of our past, and remains very important in the Orient to this day.

Cursive letters

If your student wants to improve her handwriting, obtain an interlined notebook and a copy of the cursive alphabet. Ask her to practice several rows of each letter until the shapes can be replicated easily. Short daily practices are better than marathon sessions. Stress that good handwriting can be relaxing, not a chore. Legibility is the prime consideration in handwriting.

19. SENTENCE PLAY

Provide your student with pair of short sentences to be fused with a co-ordinating conjunction (and, but, for, so or yet) or a subordinating conjunction (because, since, if, while, although and so on.) Encourage him to play with the sentences, seeking as many different combinations as possible.

Three or more sentences with a common subject or verb can be grafted into a single serial sentence. (e.g., "The college offers technical courses at night. The college offers general interest courses at nights. Academic courses are offered by the college at night." These can be combined to read: "The college offers academic, technical and general interest courses at night.")

Study ways to build up a simple sentence by adding adjectives, adverbs, subordinate clauses and preposition phrases (e.g., "My tutor has a dog. My tutor has a large dog. My tutor has large, mean, smelly dog. My old, sick tutor has a large, mean, smelly dog who is afraid of cats." Or make silly variations: "My mean, smelly tutor, who is afraid of cats, has a large old dog.")

19. SENTENCE PLAY (continued)

Food for thought

The more learners play with language, modify sentences and descriptions and write crazy things, the easier and more natural reading other people's writing becomes. Instead of teaching formal grammar, which is unnatural and removed from the act of reading and writing, it is possible to play with building up complex sentences, changing them, getting familiar with adding parts.

RESOURCE:

Reading, How To.

20. NONSENSE WORDS

You can encourage your student to work more aggressively with unfamiliar words by first playing with nonsense words. Make up some ridiculous words, like "stubphone, reambinder, wallmat." Have your student pronounce them, make up meanings for them, and use them in sentences.

Show her how to invent nonsense words by combining simple words into compound words, as in the above examples. Add verb endings and prefixes to see what happens: "wallmatted, diswallmatted."

VARIATIONS:

Combinations

Combine a list of consonants (like l, m, s, r, t) with a list of syllables (like ite, een, oom, eep, ick) to make new words. Sort out the real words,and invent meanings for the nonsense ones *(See Word Patterns, Tool 4).*

Transformer

Begin with a compound word like "blackboard" or "broadcast" and transform it by adding new beginnings,

20. NONSENSE WORDS (continued)

no matter how silly (e.g., Blackboard, Surfboard, Breadboard, Snowboard, Ploughboard, Hairboard, Milkboard, Earboard, Motherboard, Dashboard...).

Breakfast Breakdown

Say the name of your breakfast cereal (*Kelloggs*, or some other familiar brand name) 20 times until its familiar meaning begins to break down. Decide upon a crazy new meaning for this word. Transform it by adding prefixes (like re, mis, un, pre, in) and suffixes (like ish, ation, ary, ness, able, ed, ing, ious).

Name Game

Think of some personality characteristics of a friend, husband, tutor, or neighbour and use the friend's name as the root for a new word describing that quality. Add prefixes and suffixes and think of different contexts (e.g. "The weather has turned Fredish," "Let's re-Fred the chicken dinner.")

21. GAMES & INCENTIVES

Encourage your student to play with words through games such as *Crossword, Hangman,* and *I Spy*. Books of crossword puzzles with basic vocabulary are available. Make your own crosswords by writing your student's name vertically on a piece of grid paper and asking him to build on other words in a crossword pattern.

Scrabble

Scrabble is a word game which teaches students to search for word patterns. A student with a limited vocabulary but an opportunistic mind can play the game with great success. Other word games are *Spill & Spell, Perquackey,* and *Password.*

Matching Game

Write out the brand names from an advertising flyer and ask your student to match them to the product illustrations.

Sorting Game

Mix up car names, people names and animal names, then sort them into categories. Some may appear in more than one category.

21. GAMES & INCENTIVES (continued)

Found Words

Make a list of all the words seen on a walk to the store.

Cartoon Balloons

Use liquid paper to white out the content of the word balloons in a cartoon. Enlarge the cartoon on a photocopier and ask your student to invent dialogue and write it into the balloons. Compare with the original.

Map

Make a map of the home and label all the parts.

Family Tree

Make a family tree, writing down the names of all relatives.

Reward

Agree with your student to have a special outing, treat, or gift exchange if a goal is reached by the end of the month.

21. GAMES & INCENTIVES (continued)

Graphs and Charts

Choose one or two areas where learning can be quantified and show your student how to make a graph to record progress. Graphs might be used to chart number of letter sounds learned, number of pages read per week, number of new words learned, spelling words learned, number of pages written, number of consecutive lessons attended without a miss, or reading speed in words per minute for a given book.

22. DIALOGUES (ESL)

If you are teaching your student English as a second language, ask her about situations where she needs better spoken English, such as greeting people on the street, returning goods to a store, or talking with a doctor. Write a brief, two-voice dialogue of three or four exchanges using authentic speech idioms. Read the dialogue to your student twice, using hand gestures to signify the two speaking voices, and explaining unfamiliar expressions as you go.

Next, practice each exchange with her until it is memorized, and then practice the whole dialogue. Act out the parts, assuming gestures and facial expressions. When you have memorized the complete dialogue, switch speaking roles and learn it the other way. Save the dialogue and practise it in successive lessons.

VARIATIONS:

Reading a Dialogue

Have your student read a copy of the dialogue aloud. Make a cloze exercise by whiting out every tenth word, every noun, or every verb.

Dictation

Dictate the dialogue while she writes it out.

22. DIALOGUES (ESL) (continued)

Substitution

Insert new facts into the familiar dialogue and read it through. Practice alternate idioms for beginning or endingconversations.

Improvised Dialogues

If your student has intermediate speaking skills, think up an imaginary encounter, such as a canvasser calling at the door, and improvise a dialogue to fit the situation. Discuss how it went, and do it again, polishing the roughedges.

Taped Talk

Tape record your spoken dialogue and review it together, paying special note to awkward expressions, wrong stress, and confusing pronunciation.

Stress Test

Practise a familiar dialogue, then focus on stress and intonation. Substitute nonsense words to emphasize the stressed words and the rising or falling pitch (e.g., "Do you like spinach?; da, da, da, DAH, da?").

22. DIALOGUES (ESL) (continued)

Nonsense Dialogue

Start with a single exchange, then try to extend the dialogue as long as possible, saying any silly idea which pops into your head, but keeping to the format of a conversation.

Translation

Have your student write out a familiar dialogue in third person.

Phone talk

Prepare a telephone dialogue inquiring, for example, about a "For Sale" ad in the newspaper. Set up two kitchen chairs placed back to back, and practice the dialogue without eye contact. For more realistic practice, order a telephone practice kit from B.C. Tel. This device, available free, enables you to sit in different rooms, using real phones, while a recorder can tape your conversation from a central monitor.

For homework, ask your student to call some numbers in the want ads, and record the conversations. An inexpensive acoustic coupler, available in audio stores, will allow you to record the incoming voice on a tape recorder.

RESOURCE: *Side By Side*

23. PRONUNCIATION CONTRASTS (ESL)

Tape record an entire lesson to help identify the vowels and consonants which your ESL student mispronounces. Write out a list of problem words and beside each word write the way it is mispronounced (e.g., "grass" is pronounced "glass," or "vest" is pronounced "west").

Choose one of these and make a list of other paired words which show the confused pronunciation, e.g.,

Dime	Time
Doll	Tall
Den	Ten
Dock	Talk
Dad	Tad

First make sure your student can hear the difference between these sounds by saying a pair and asking if the two words are the same or different. Then say one word twice and ask if he hears the same or different sounds.

When your student can hear the difference between "d" and "t," ask him to indicate which sound he hears by pointing to the letter "d" or "t." Then practice with pairs which show the letter in the middle and at the end of words. When he consistently hears the distinct sounds, have him read them, first reading down the "t" list, then

23. PRONUNCIATION CONTRASTS (ESL) (continued)

the "d" list, then the "d-t" pairs. Practice the sounds at the middle and ending of the words (e.g., medal, metal, had, hat).

Make up short sentences with frequent examples of the "d" and "t" sounds. (e.g., "Don took a date to the dance.") and have your student read them.

VARIATIONS:

Listening Exercise

Give your student a printed list of words, then tell him to number them in order as you read them out.

Diagram

Find or make a profile drawing of the head, showing an X-ray view of the lips, teeth, tongue and palate. Use the drawing to help him think about how these parts should be positioned to make certain sounds.

RESOURCE:

Pronunciation Contrasts; Working Together.

24. WHISPER, SHOUT, AND SING (ESL)

Explain to your ESL student how stress (intensity of speech) and intonation (rising and falling pitch) help to convey meaning. Read some familiar two-syllable words, pointing out how one syllable is always stressed more than the other. Practise with a list of multisyllabic words, deliberately overemphasizing the stressed syllables and whispering the unstressed ones. Then read them with normal contrast.

Read a short sentence and decide which words would be stressed. Again, "shout" the stressed words and whisper the others. Play with the sentences by stressing different words and noting how this affects meaning. Reread the sentence with normal contrast.

Compare a sentence which asks a question with one which makes a statement. Listen for the rising and falling pitch of your voice as these are spoken. Ask your student to "sing" a series of practice sentences, deliberately overemphasizing the rising and falling pitch of the voice.

24. WHISPER, SHOUT & SING (ESL) (continued)

VARIATIONS:

Scales

Show your student how to sustain a vowel sound for three or four seconds at a comfortable pitch. Taking the pitch as "do,"sing up the major scale one octave, then back down, using the same sustained vowel sound. Try for maximum intensity with acceptable voice quality.

Fade Down

Ask your student to read a short paragraph of about five sentences, starting at maximum intensity and gradually reducing intensity to a conversational level.

Phrasing

Read a paragraph of five sentences without phrasing, as a continuous sequence of words. Then read it with pauses for phrasing. Ask your student to read a paragraph silently, then aloud, with special attention to phrasing. Consider varied ways of phrasing the paragraph***(Blocking, Tool 11).***

24. WHISPER, SHOUT & SING (ESL) (continued)

Rate

Ask your student to stand at one end of a room and read a paragraph of 165 words as if addressing a group of 20 or more people. Tape the reading and time it. Try to stay within the range of 150 to 175 words per minute. Try to read the passage at 130 words per minute and then at 200 words per minute without sacrificing articulation.

Fun With Soaps

Transcribe some soap opera dialogue and practise reading it with different rate, phrasing, stress and intonation to suggest different meanings and emotions.

25. PUBLICATION

Encourage your student to think of himself as an author with something original and valuable to say. Ask for copies of his stories, poems or observations for your own reading pleasure. Comment on the parts you like.

Type a presentation copy of his finished work on a computer. Allow ample white space. Ask your student to choose type size, style, font, and spacing. Leave space for a photograph or art. Post photocopies of his finished works on the wall at your meeting place. Encourage your student to make photocopies available to his family and acquaintances.

Personal Book

Desktop publishing programs such as *Aldus PageMaker* can easily create a two-up chapbook from standard letter sheets. Have your student make a title, cover illustration, dedication, and table of contents. As few as six short writings are enough to make a personal book. Covers can be photocopied on coloured paper which can then be laminated and stapled for permanence. Ten copies can be produced for a few dollars. Suggest that he present autographed copies as gifts to friends and relatives.

25. PUBLICATION (continued)

Othersuggestions

If your student has trouble thinking creatively, consider some of the following ideas: ask him to transform a journal entry, experience story, or dialogue into a work of fiction by changing all "I's" and "We's" into third person (he, she, they) and adding extra facts to make it more readable.

Found Poems

Clip or record phrases from the everyday world. Mix them up and combine them in random patterns until a poemappears.

Concrete Poems

Check an anthology of concrete poems. Write the letters of your name in various typographical patterns, or combine with one or two other words until a poem appears.

25. PUBLICATION (continued)

Haiku

After discussing examples, ask your student to write a 17-syllable poem of three lines. The lines should be formed of five, seven and five words respectively, expressing a single idea, image or feeling.

Sideliner

Choose a short title for a poem, then write it vertically down the left side of the page in capital letters. Make a free verse, beginning each line with a letter from the title.

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